

EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM



FOCUS ON COLLABORATION



united states department of agriculture
cooperative state research, education,
and extension service



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The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service s (CSREES) Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is a unique program that operates in all 50 States and in American Samoa, Guam, Micronesia, Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. It is designed to assist limited resource audiences in acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and changed behavior necessary for nutritionally sound diets, and to contribute to their personal development and the improvement of the total family diet and nutritional well-being.

EFNEP targets two primary audiences: limited resource youth and limited resource families with young children. In Fiscal Year 1999, EFNEP reached youth and families; over 660,899 family members were indirectly reached through the adult participant.

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FOCUS ON COLLABORATION

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) has demonstrated multi-agency cooperation since its inception. In its effort to deliver a nutrition education program, it has worked with local, state, and national government agencies and the private sector. More specifically, EFNEP has complied with legislative acts (Food and Agriculture Act 1977) and Congressional directives (Senate Report 98-566) which have mandated joint efforts with other government agencies.

EFNEP Focus on Collaboration will share information about some of the recent cooperative efforts. The definition of cooperation in this reference is working together for a common objective and a joint action that will result in greater efficiency for the cooperators and improved benefit for the program user.

Based on a compilation of data from 51 states in FY99, EFNEP provided services in 1419 (63%) of the 2,258 WIC Offices available, and provided services in 769 (65%) of the 1,187 Food Stamp Offices available. There were 847 cooperative agreements, and 1,445 coalitions. Over \$6 million in grant dollars and contributions was received from other federal agencies and the private sector in addition to federal funding to support the program and to increase impact.

Collaborations occurred under various conditions: formal, informal, planned, spontaneous, emergencies, long- or short-range, or project oriented. The manner of cooperation centered on program policy issues, development of materials, and programs benefitting the audience. Collaborations have impacted various audiences in multiple ways. *EFNEP Focus on Collaboration* illustrates some of those collaborations, the types of audiences impacted, and how they were impacted.

Additional information about EFNEP can be found at www.reeusda.gov/4h/efnep/home.htm.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

In **California**, county program staff are expanding local networks to include groups and agencies not previously served. In addition, some college campuses are cooperating with EFNEP. The colleges provide dietetic interns, undergraduate and graduate students to work with youth EFNEP participants. EFNEP in turn provides the training needed for them to teach nutrition education and to work with young people. California State University (CSU) at Long Beach, CSU Pomona, CSU Northridge, CSU San Bernardino, University of Southern California Medical Center, University of California, San Francisco Nursing Program, UCLA Affiliates, Charles Drew Hospital, Loma Linda University, and UC Davis are all involved.

In **Hawaii**, collaborative relations led to a successful program in the Leeward community of Oahu. For the past five years EFNEP on Oahu has pursued joint group educational efforts with networking agencies providing meeting rooms, childcare and food for demonstrations. In 1998, an Oahu Program Assistant successfully negotiated an EFNEP lesson series with a parent group. The Parent Community Networking Center made flyers, secured a classroom with a sink, purchased all foods necessary for food demonstrations, and brought in supportive ideas and materials to enhance what EFNEP had to offer. This success could be the start of similar educational partnerships throughout the State of Hawaii.

In **Rhode Island**, in conjunction with Share Our Strength - Operation Frontline, EFNEP paraprofessionals joined trained chefs to teach nutrition and food preparation skills to low- income audiences throughout the state. As a result of a 1996 grant from the Rhode Island Department of Human Services targeting all community action program agencies in the state with mandated two-session food budgeting workshops, eleven classes with a total of 76 participants were taught basic techniques of food budgeting.

In **Vermont**, Operation Frontline sponsors classes on nutrition, cooking and food budgeting for people who are at risk of poor nutrition or hunger. By bringing together chefs and nutritionists to teach a six-week series of classes, the program strives to build skills and influence knowledge and behaviors. Operation Frontline pays for program participants to take home a bag of groceries after each class which includes the ingredients for the recipes that were prepared that day by the chef. One of the advantages of working with EFNEP that was identified by Operation Frontline is that EFNEP staff are able to follow-up with individual home visits in situations where this would be beneficial to the program participant. In Vermont, EFNEP Nutrition Assistants worked hand-in-hand with chefs in seven counties across the state as part of the Operation Frontline program during 1997.

FOOD SAFETY

Cooking with kids from the **Oregon** Dairy Council combines basic nutrition education, food safety and hands-on food activities to put knowledge into action. Fruit was emphasized to encourage youth to eat more fruit and try new varieties. Raisins and grapes were used to teach the importance of drinking water. Volunteers were trained in the use of the EFNEP curriculum. One-thousand eighty low-income second graders at 22 sites received this program. Eighteen school principals, 50 teachers aides and 20 volunteers were also involved.

In the **Virgin Islands**, 22 teens participated in the annual EFNEP Summer Teen Program. The program provided for planning meals, buying, preparing, handling and storage of foods. Video presentations, dietary handouts, recipe adaptations, and field trips rounded out the ERIB II curriculum. In cooperation with a local junior high school in the Virgin Islands, concepts in basic nutrition and food safety were taught and demonstrated to 13 students. A visit to the Home Economics Laboratory reinforced the

concepts taught in the classroom. A closing ceremony was held where the students displayed what they learned. One display focused on healthier snack choices and another was a food safety chart.

FOOD SECURITY

In **Tennessee**, a homemaker enrolled in Fresh Start, a program targeted to low-income parents receiving welfare, had not cooked in months and never shopped for food at the grocery store. However, she reported that after her participation in EFNEP she purchased enough food for 3 weeks, and spent \$100 less than she usually spent, cutting her food bill in half. She said she used coupons, read labels, shopped for bargains and purchased less expensive brands.

In **Vermont**, a collaborative effort that will involve EFNEP and is just beginning to take shape is the People Grow project.

People Grow was recently funded as part of the Community Food Projects grants out of CSREES. EFNEP will work collaboratively with six other organizations to build a model for achieving food security in two Vermont communities. Components of the grant, in addition to the nutrition education that will be provided by EFNEP, include involving individuals and families in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), community gardens, micro-enterprise, agricultural education for youth, food preservation workshops, and ultimately working towards incorporation of food policy into local communities.

GARDENING

Cook County jail in **Illinois** is the site of one of the most successful gardening projects around. When you enter a prison, you rarely think of fresh fruit and vegetables. Cook County EFNEP partners with the jail to provide seeds and gardening expertise to the prisoners. The change in the prisoners is positive

and WIC buys the produce for the Chicago Farmer's Market. EFNEP then provides food demonstrations and recipes in the WIC Food Centers throughout the summer. Clientele love the food and are eager to try the foods on their own. The partnership with WIC and EFNEP provides for a collaborative safety net for their Chicago audience.

In **Kentucky**, paraprofessionals assisted 501 families with gardening. Many of the paraprofessionals negotiated for seeds, equipment, chemicals, garden plots, and in-kind services. These donations from churches, the Christian Appalachian Project, Berea College, Lake Cumberland Community Services, hardware stores, farm stores, and industrial park and private citizens came to \$5,0128.

FARMER'S MARKETS

In **New York**, through EFNEP's involvement with the Farmer Market Nutrition Education Program (FMNP), 30,788 individuals were directly provided with nutrition education messages about regional, seasonal produce. Two hundred and three (203) Extension paid and volunteer staff conducted 875 sessions at 87 Farmers Markets, 1,449 sessions at 121 WIC clinics, and 78 sessions at 68 congregate feeding sites. Additional outreach nutrition education regarding farmers markets and consumption of locally grown fruits and vegetables was accomplished at various county fairs and community health fairs. One thousand one-hundred seventy-five (1,175) FMNP participants were referred to EFNEP and 745 were enrolled into EFNEP. Nine hundred seventy (970) FMNP participants were referred to the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program. An estimated 558 referrals were made to WIC as a result of FMNP. Extension staff involved in direct outreach activities included 19 agent educators, 132 nutrition teaching assistants, 28 program assistants, and 24 volunteers.

SPECIAL NEEDS

In **Connecticut**, a bilingual EFNEP Assistant has helped in menu planning and food preparation for the Puerto Rican family of a 13-year old boy with Phenylketonuria (P U). P U is an inborn error of metabolism in which individuals cannot metabolize phenylalanine, an essential amino acid found in protein foods. Treatment for this disorder involves a special diet in which no meat, eggs, fish, dairy, legumes, nuts and seeds are allowed, and a special metabolic formula provides supplemental amino acids without phenylalanine. The diet is extremely restrictive and expensive, but without it, severe complications and even death will occur. Although this adolescent was closely followed by the Genetics Clinic at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center, the family needed additional support and teaching about the diet from a bilingual educator. Few services can provide the intensive menu planning and food preparation that EFNEP can. Home visits by the EFNEP Assistant were conducted, with close supervision by the EFNEP Supervisor at all phases of the intervention and frequent communication with the Genetics Clinic. Results were (1) the family received help in preparing special low-protein products in the home, as well as with shopping and menu planning in order to increase dietary variety. Both mother and adolescent were involved in these sessions; (2) the adolescent received a scholarship to participate in a P U Family Weekend in Ivoryton in order to meet others with P U. The EFNEP Assistant also attended as a volunteer; (3) the EFNEP Assistant helped the family to complete mail order forms for low-protein products, and receive financial assistance and special formulas from the pharmacy. This helped assure that the family would not run out of special formula and low-protein food, as had happened several times before EFNEP intervention; (4) the adolescent was referred to a male counselor at the Institute of the Hispanic Family to deal with a number of personal issues about his medical condition; and (5) EFNEP facilitated communications between the family and the medical center to resolve medical and diet issues.

Monthly home visits with this family by the EFNEP Assistant have provided intensive support for the diet maintenance and greater understanding of the medical necessity for the diet restrictions. Diet variety and access to special foods and formula have increased significantly. This has been a unique and successful model linking a community-based nutrition education program with a tertiary clinic. In addition, cultural and language sensitivity on the part of the EFNEP Assistant have resulted in much more trust and responsiveness to medical recommendations by this family.

LIFE SKILLS

The Strengthening Programs for Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) project is an CSREES-USDA funded program which supports local Cooperative Extension Service efforts to expand their capacity to serve children, youth, and families living in at-risk environments. This is accomplished by providing funds to improve program delivery, initiate new community and state collaborations, and significantly expand effective programming. In **Louisiana**, a targeted community project involving East Carroll and Madison EFNEP units was one of the projects funded through CYFAR. The project was funded for \$21,965 in FY97. Existing EFNEP paraprofessionals worked an additional 5 hours per week with targeted families. The paraprofessionals served as parent coaches, and through home visitation, visited 40 families bi-weekly to provide support and deliver educational programs in parenting, resource management, nutrition, family communication, job readiness and other life skills. Twenty families were reached in each EFNEP unit in this home visitation project.

In a new collaboration with FOOD for Lane County, **Oregon**, the area's food bank, FOOD recruits clients, finds a location with kitchen facilities, provides child care and groceries

for the participants. EFNEP provides the nutrition lesson and directs the preparation of a full lunch. After lunch, community speakers present topics concerning client issues such as dealing with credit and anger management.

In **Texas**, specialty programs were offered to various centers that had conducted the basic six nutrition classes and that wanted additional youth classes. This year, anie C. Turner Center and Girls, Inc., participated in nutrition and financial management classes. The four-day classes focused on nutrition, food safety, consumer skills, and financial management. A total of 89 individuals participated. The pre- and post-test evaluations showed a 25% increase in nutrition and financial management knowledge. One volunteer leader stated, the specialty classes provided continuous exposure to nutrition information and also familiari ed the youth with information on financial management. Such classes provided the youth with a road map toward their own future.

PREGNANT TEENS

In **Indiana**, the Have A Healthy Baby (HHB) program continues to impact pregnant teens and limited resource adults by providing them with the information needed to help them have healthy babies. Over the eight year history of the program, over 240 schools and sites have been served by this program. In several cases, this program is taught more than once a semester. In FY97, HHB was taught 274 times in schools and community sites by Extension Educators. It was taught by EFNEP paraprofessionals in 22 counties in groups and in homes. One thousand five-hundred ninety-six (1,596) pregnant teens and adults participated in the program in FY97; 1,071 of those were in schools and community sites. Six hundred forty-eight (648) were taught by Program Educators, 423 by Extension Educators and 525 by EFNEP paraprofessionals.

Nine hundred ninety-two (992) live births were recorded during FY96. Only 62 of those were low-birthweight. This percentage continues to be lower than the state average. Two neonatal deaths were recorded. This rate continues to also be less than the state average. Even those births that were low-birthweight stayed fewer days in the hospital (11 days) than the average of 30 days. The difference between staying 11 days and 30 days has economic implications of approximately \$1.8 million yearly. To support the potential financial savings attributable to the program, improvements continue to be shown in decreased smoking, increased weight gain, and increased WIC participation. Extension Educators have received grants from Step Ahead Councils to purchase teaching materials and workbooks for the teens.

In **Mississippi**, six of the counties provided pregnant and parenting teens with specialized learning experiences which helped to improve the quality of life for teen mothers and their babies. In Washington County, the adult EFNEP Nutrition Educators provided nutrition teaching to the clients of the Bright Futures project, a collaborative effort between the Extension Service, a hospital, and other social service agencies to provide parenting, resource management, nutrition and family planning information to new mothers.

Forsyth County, **North Carolina**, has the support of Smart Start funding and EFNEP to work closely with pregnant teens. Some of the teen fathers participate with the teen mothers in discussions and hands-on learning. Using the curriculum, Hey What's Cookin' the teens develop skills in food preparation, food selection and options for the teen habit of snacking. One of the encouraging successes has been the cooperative relationship among EFNEP, WIC and the teen focus. Most of the referrals are coming from the county WIC and Health Department efforts.

Ohio EFNEP Educators taught 446 pregnant and or nursing teens in 1998. primary avenue for reaching these teens has been through the GRADS teachers in each school district. GRADS is a state program administered through the schools to keep pregnant teens in school until they can graduate. The GRADS teachers welcome the EFNEP Educators to their classrooms to teach nutrition because they notice improved eating practices after the Educators have been there. The incidence of low-birth weight babies is lower in the GRADS population than it is in the general pregnant teen population.

La Gloria in Trujillo Alto, **Puerto Rico**, has a high incidence of pregnant teenagers. This creates a chain of social problems in the community concerning health, school desertion and child care. As a result, a program called Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies was developed. The objective of the program was to help the students understand the importance a balanced diet has for them and their babies, to change their food habits, to prevent disease for them and their babies, and to remain in school. The program includes: 1) What is a balanced diet; 2) Understand the role food plays in the formation of their bodies; 3) How food can make a healthier mother and baby; 4) Breastfeeding how and why; 5) Pregnancy and health. The project was developed holding group meetings with teachers, parents, and students. The groups consisted of 22 teenage students between the ages of 13 to 15 of which six were pregnant.

During Nutrition Month the students and the school community organized exhibitions and invited other agencies to participate with them. Smaller groups were made to bring this information to other community groups as churches, schools and social groups. They also participated at an information center in the Local Health Center at Trujillo Alto. All these activities were of great impact on the community. At the end of the project, the

students had achieved the goals of the program, understanding the importance of a balanced diet during pregnancy and breastfeeding. All six pregnant students have remained in school and all six have had their babies.

EFNEP in Harris County, **Texas**, has been collaborating with the Houston Independent School District (HISD) for the last one and half years through the Office of Adolescent and Family Life. EFNEP has provided food and nutrition education to the Opportunities for Parenting Teens (OPT) grant and to the Pregnancy, Education and Parenting (PEP) program. In addition to the standard EFNEP curriculum, a nutrition curriculum designed for the pregnant teen, *StartSmart*, was used. EFNEP has committed one paraprofessional assistant to work with the twelve campuses on a full-time basis and one assistant and one associate to work in a support role. This year, at twelve campuses, the PEP program has served 1,029 female students, 42 male students, and 534 infants and children. One hundred forty-seven (147) of these teen parents graduated from high school, and twelve teens completed their GEDs.

YOUTH

Emergency Protective Services (EPS) shelter, in Hastings, **Nebraska**, is a shelter home for at-risk youth who have been taken out of their own home. This Shelter is funded by United Way. It serves infants through age 21. Their period of stay can be up to three months. The EPS director was approached last spring about EFNEP and their desire to work with a youth group there. It had been stated that not a lot of other organizations had much success or follow through. EFNEP started in May at EPS, with an after school youth group that continued through the summer and will continue to meet this fall. The group meets for one hour twice each month. The youth ages have ranged from 7-18. Personalities are greatly varied, and resistance has been felt at times, but this

group is very much worth all the efforts EFNEP can provide. The lesson topics have included Food Safety (germs, proper food handling and storage); Food Preparation (measuring liquid and dry ingredients properly); Snacks; Exercise; Breakfast; Food Guide Pyramid; and Fast Foods. Visuals are used as learning tools: food models, games, videos, measuring utensil, the recipes, and activity handouts. At each meeting a recipe is prepared by the youth themselves. The prepared recipe serves as their evening snack. The cook at the shelter is given the chosen recipe and list of ingredients needed ahead of time and includes them in her grocery shopping. Sometimes the youth help her shop to select items. This is a good learning experience. The cost of all ingredients are paid by EPS. A rewarding experience was when one 15 year old boy who hadn't actively participated in the lesson exclaimed (when it came time to wash hands and do food preparation), Oh well, I guess I'll go do it too. He ended up helping and enjoying what we did. Or an eight year old boy trying to measure accurately and then looking obviously pleased when hearing, You really did a good job. The group varies each meeting, but most often has pulled together as a team to learn and do. The EPS staff is helpful and present during the meetings. The EPS activities director and EFNEP staff feel this is going well, and with both program's efforts, are continuing with future plans for youth meetings.

In **Texas**, forty-one hundred (4,100) youth with limited resources participated in EFNEP classes to help improve the nutritional level of their diets. The nutrition classes were taught at recreation and community centers, YWCAs, Boys Girls Clubs, Girls, Inc., and other after-school programs and schools. One volunteer at the J. B. Polk Recreation Center stated, A lot of youth are benefitting from EFNEP because these classes are teaching the youth how to prepare economical and simple food items. Also, the nutrition information is very positive and helpful and is an excellent resource.

DIVERSITY

In **Iowa**, over 100 Somalian refugees were brought to Cedar Rapids via Lutheran Social Services. Lutheran Social Services was very eager to have EFNEP work with the families. One of the major problems encountered was the language barrier, but a search of the Internet yielded the food guide pyramid and several other materials that were translated into Somalian. The EFNEP supervisor, who is an Extension family support field specialist, worked closely with the program assistant to identify what to teach the families, how to teach them, etc. Many of the individuals were underweight and needed to eat more calories, but this was balanced with a concern about eating too many high fat foods. The program assistant is continuing to meet with the Somalian families and has a group that meets every Friday morning.

EFNEP professionals in **Montana** also are involved with the development and implementation of a nutrition education program, Indian Reservation Nutrition Education (IRNE) on all seven Indian Reservations in the state. This program was funded by the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations to focus on commodity food recipients. This EFNEP-inspired program has reached over 12,500 residents of the reservations who receive commodity foods. Most of the participants of the IRNE are Native Americans. Indigenous paraprofessionals were hired on each reservation to teach group lessons, make home visits, and conduct food demonstrations to enable commodity food recipients to make better use of their food resources

In Lane County, **Oregon**, efforts were made to reach the Hispanic audience. The youth curriculum, a cookbook, and evaluation tools were translated into Spanish. More materials with pictures for non-English speaking audiences and those with limited reading abilities were also used. A summer day camp program was

geared to the Hispanic audience with the help of the Girl Scouts. Staff at Centro Latino Americano helped to offer summer nutrition programming in Spanish. Most of the parents came and participated.

In **Utah**, funding was renewed for a second year from the USDA Food Distribution Program for Indian Reservation (FDPIR) and supported one EFNEP teacher at the Fort Duchesne Indian Reservation in Uintah County. Nineteen families were taught, which included 55 family members, located on the Uintah Ouray Reservation and nearby communities.

WELFARE REFORM

In **Iowa**, a new partner for EFNEP has been Promise obs. Promise obs requires that welfare recipients participate in job training and parenting education to continue receiving benefits. Local EFNEP unit supervisors have made contact with local Promise obs coordinators to develop arrangements where Promise obs recipients participate in EFNEP as part of either their job training or parenting education component. At least two counties have been successful in developing arrangements where eight hours of nutrition education is presented to Promise obs participants.

EFNEP staff have also been involved with the new welfare reform project in **Montana** called FAIM, (Families Achieving Independence in Montana). As part of the agreement to strive toward self-sufficiency, welfare recipients have the opportunity to attend EFNEP classes. EFNEP staff have worked closely with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services and the county offices of Public Assistance to determine the most focused lessons and methods for these participants.

A major collaboration in Youngstown, **Ohio** involves many organizations, including EFNEP. The families being helped by this collaborative effort are women affected by the Ohio Works First (Welfare to Work) Program. EFNEP provides nutrition and related teaching. Other collaborating organizations help the families with housing, job placement, and educational training.

REFERRAL SERVICES

In **Connecticut**, EFNEP successfully makes referrals to other agencies so that people can obtain needed services. One homemaker participating in home visits began discussing concerns she had with her food stamps being cut, and with housing landlord problems. The EFNEP Assistant referred the client to Legal Aid, who intervened and was able to assist in housing issues and food stamp certification. Legal Aid also detected that her apartment had high lead levels, which could make her eligible for a reimbursement of rent monies paid to her landlord.

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